

provision for commutation, reduction in discounting rate for early payment of pension, provision of ensuring pension payment in default cases, application of the scheme to the serving subscribers who did not join the Family Pension Scheme, 1971, refund of family pension related withdrawal benefit in the case of exemption and coverage of piece-rated workers. These suggestions were examined and a notification carrying out necessary amendments in the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 was issued on 28.2.1996. Based on the recommendations of the Central Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund, the Scheme has been further amended providing *inter-alia*, for payment of pension to the dependant parents, life long pension to the disabled children enhancement of minimum children pension from Rs. 115/- to Rs.150/- per month, minimum orphan pension from Rs. 170/- to Rs.250/- per month, minimum widow pension to Rs.450/- per month in respect of the beneficiaries of the ceased Family Pension Scheme, 1971. Consequent to first annual valuation of the Pension Fund an increase of 4% on pension in payment was sanctioned to the beneficiaries w.e.f. 16.11.1996. On completion of second annual valuation of the Pension Fund as on 31.3.1998, an additional increase of 5.5% on pension in payment has been sanctioned to the pensioners w.e.f. 1.4.1998. However, the recommendation of the Central Board of Trustees for enhancement of interest on the pension fund kept in public account from 8.5% to 12% per annum has not been found acceptable by the Government due to financial constraints.

Medical delivery system in ESI Scheme

3724. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee of Experts has been set up by the Central Government to study the existing medical delivery system in ESI Scheme;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has submitted its report;

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(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, by when the report is likely to be submitted by the Committee and the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A Committee under Chairmanship of Shri S.R. Satyam was appointed to review working of ESI Hospitals and general quality of services offered by them to the ESI beneficiaries. The Committee submitted its report on 14/1/1999.

(d) Does not arise.

Relaxation of the Provident Fund Rules

3725. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration for relaxation of the Provident Fund Rules for the employees of the drought, famine, floods and cyclone hit areas in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken so far, thereon; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) Paragraph 68-L of the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952 already provides for grant of non-refundable advances to the EPF subscribers whose